THE BI-MONTHLY

Newsletter of the Bisexual Center

Volume 3, Number 5 July/August 1979

COVER: "Eros Awakening," by Jim Barnes

HELP WANTED

Bay Area Members: want to make new friends, find out how your Bi Center works, and help the Center out, as well? Volunteer for an hour or so every month: help us staff the office, write up membership cards, or collect donations at a potluck! We need your help badly, and you'll enjoy getting to know the people who really make the Bi Center run!

Give us a call at 922-2300, and leave your name and phone number. Please help!

NEWSLETTER NEEDS

We urgently need a good typist willing to donate one or two hours every two months to type articles for the Bi-Monthly. We can arrange to drop the copy off at your home and pick it up later, if necessary.

We also need people willing to come to the Center on Newsletter days to help cut and paste.

And, we always welcome your contributions: graphics, poetry, articles--your experiences and ideas.

GARAGE SALE PLANS

The Bi Center is planning a garage sale sometime in late September or early October. We need a space to hold it in, and a truck or van to help transport our "junque" from here to there. Also, we need more "junque" of all types.

If you can help with any of this, call and leave a message at 922-2300, or call Marilyn King at 431-5513.

All materials submitted for publication become the property of the Bisexual Center and are subject to revision and/or editing at the discretion of the Newsletter Committee. Opinions expressed in such material are those of the originator(s), and do not necessarily reflect the policies of the Bisexual Center.

THE BISEXUAL CENTER

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this issue

PUBLISHER: The Bisexual Center

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PRODUCTION: Jim Barnes, Robin Crabill, Marcy Entwistle, David Lourea, K.J. Quick.

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BISEXUALITY: A PERSONAL VIEW

by Debbie Willis

The following article is reprinted by permission from the magazine WOMEN: A Journal of Liberation, Vol. 4, No. 1 (Winter, 1974).

Bisexuality to me means an openness to the possibility of sexual and emotional relationships with both sexes. As much as anything concrete, it is a space inside my head. It is a choice based on emotion and not ideology. I find myself with strong feelings for members of both sexes and to try to deny either response to conform to ideology or social pressure would be very destructive. It is not a position I recommend as I have often found it a difficult and confusing place to be.

At this point in history it seems a particularly awkward choice to make, or at least my personal experience has been so. I came out about two and a half years ago at a time when the women's movement where I was beginning to be seriously divided. The prevailing tendency was that a true feminist has to be lesbian and not relate to men; I succumbed to this tendency myself. I identified as lesbian although I continued to carry on a furtive relationship with a gay man. This was known by my woman lover (who also had a male lover she occasionally saw) but by and large I kept it a secret from the lesbian community I was working poltically with; I just happened to have this gay male "friend". I felt extremely guilty about it yet I couldn't convince myself to stop seeing him completely when I was getting something positive out of it.

At the end of that year I spent a part of the summer with my parents, during which time they found out I was gay. My mother could not accept it, even when I for the first time used the word "bisexual" in aplication to myself. Although I felt I was copping out by using that label, I also felt it most truly corresponded to my feelings.

A year of intense confusion followed. I did not go back to Madison in the fall. I went to an art school in California where there was no supportive lesbian community. There was a sizable gay community, however, mostly male and not at all political, in which I did not feel very comfortable. A war was going on in my head: was I gay or straight? On the one side was my mother and all the forces of mainstream American society saying, be straight, be straight, if you want us to love you. I was vulnerable to this side because I valued my relationship with my mother and didn't want this gulf that had arisen between us; I also, to a certain extent, wanted to be able to move through mainstream society without fear.

On the other side were the voices of lesbian feminism saying, be gay, be gay, relating to men is colluding with the enemy, you're a traitor, at this point in history you should be putting all your energy into women. In between was a weak little voice saying, follow your feelings.

I had a great deal of trouble trying to find any feelings at all. I realized that I wasn't going to be able to resolve anything with so many moral imperatives running around in my head, so I tried to lull both sides of the argument to sleep. I more or less withdrew from politics, putting most of my energy into study. I went home again for the summer, appeasing my mother with the fact I was having no affairs with women (nor with men either), although covertly slipping out to gay bars a few times.

In the fall I came to Berkeley. I felt a great freedom, coming here with no attachments. I could be anybody I wanted to--if only I knew who I wanted to be. I tried to give free rein to my fantasies, falling in love with people on buses, on the street, teachers, etc., taking them to bed with me in my dreams. I tried on the label "bisexual," and, although the opposing voices returned, they were not as loud.

During this time I started thinking about politics again, and for the first time started viewing feminism from a Marxist perspective. I say "for the first time" because, although I was involved in general left politics before becoming involved in the women's movement, it was not with any coherent analysis. It became clear to me that socialism is prerequisite to any true liberation of women, for all oppression is rooted in class divisions in which the means of production are control-

led by a few. The oppression of women arises from this contradiction, rather than, as some radical feminists see it, the sex division itself being the cause of all other class divisions. Consequently, I was no longer convinced by the argument that all one's energy should be going into women, for a commitment to struggling for socialism means at least part of one's energy is going for the benefit of men as well as women. I affirm putting some of my energy into men, both politically and personally. My politics now seem much more consonant with my feelings.

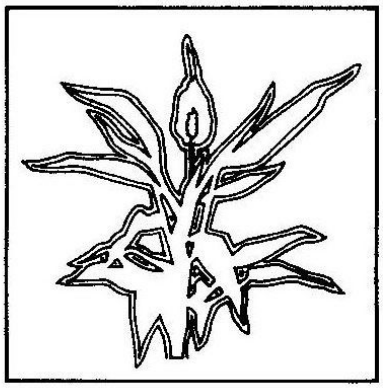
As a woman from a white, middle-class background the oppression that seemed most heavy to me was that arising from sexism; I think it is because of this that I was originally attracted to the radical feminist argument that poses sex as the primary contradiction and men as the enemy. I was then guilt-tripped by this argument into not being able to stand up for the heterosexual part of my sexuality.

On the other hand, I think that for a while, when I was trying to hang loose from my moral imperatives, I slipped back into the closet, and took advantage of heterosexual privilege. In society at large it is obviously easier to play straight. I stopped confronting myself about my gayness and did not reveal it to very many of the people I was around, putting that part of my sexuality on ice.

I am now trying to allow myself the full range of my sexuality. I still have a very difficult time getting behind the label "bisexual," however. For one thing, I don't like how it has recently been presented in the media as the latest sleep-with-anything-that-moves fad; I find that abhorrent and don't want to be associated with it. For another, the battle in my head continues, to a certain extent, and I still feel a kind of panic whenever I identify myself as bisexual, even when I'm aware the response will probably be sympathetic, such as within the Women's Union. I feel particularly cowardly because at the present time I'm in a relationship with a man and not with a woman (though open to that possibility). In some ways coming out as bisexual has been harder for me than my original coming out into the supportive lesbian community--though not harder than coming out to my parents.

I see bisexuality not as a refusal to make a choice one way or the other, or as a transitional fuzziness, but as a third alternative with its own dynamics. I support both women who have chosen to be heterosexual and those who have chosen to be lesbian. I also think that those who are unsure of where they're at need a supported space of their own. One of our greatest oppressions under capitalism has been to become alienated from our emotions and desires by being forced into roles not of our own choosing. Part of taking power over our lives as women means reclaiming our feelings.

I see it as important for bisexual women to act on the fact of lesbian oppression, since it is for our gayness that we are oppressed, not for our heterosexuality. It is necessary for us to put energy into the political and social struggles around lesbianism and not to fall back on a primarily straight identification. This tendency to fall back may be due in part to fears of encountering hostility from separatist sectors of the lesbian community; it is also no doubt due to our own heterosexism and must be struggled against.



**"What I have been through
has led me to where I am.**

**Where I am
is leading me
to where I will be.**

And this reflects back."

Dave Pleimann - 1978
**(written while spending
a year traveling through
the United States)**

**While moving forward
it's nice to use
this time of greeting
to reminisce back
on feelings shared,
memories treasured
and
never forgotten friends.**

POETRY

LYRICS TO BILL

by Sarah French

If you said to me
How you longed to be free
I'd say to you
Oh how I'd be blue

But if you said to me
How you longed to be free
I'd let you go
Through the pain in my soul

'Cause what kind of lover am I
If your needs aren't my concerns?
And what kind of lover am I
If I'm one who never learns?

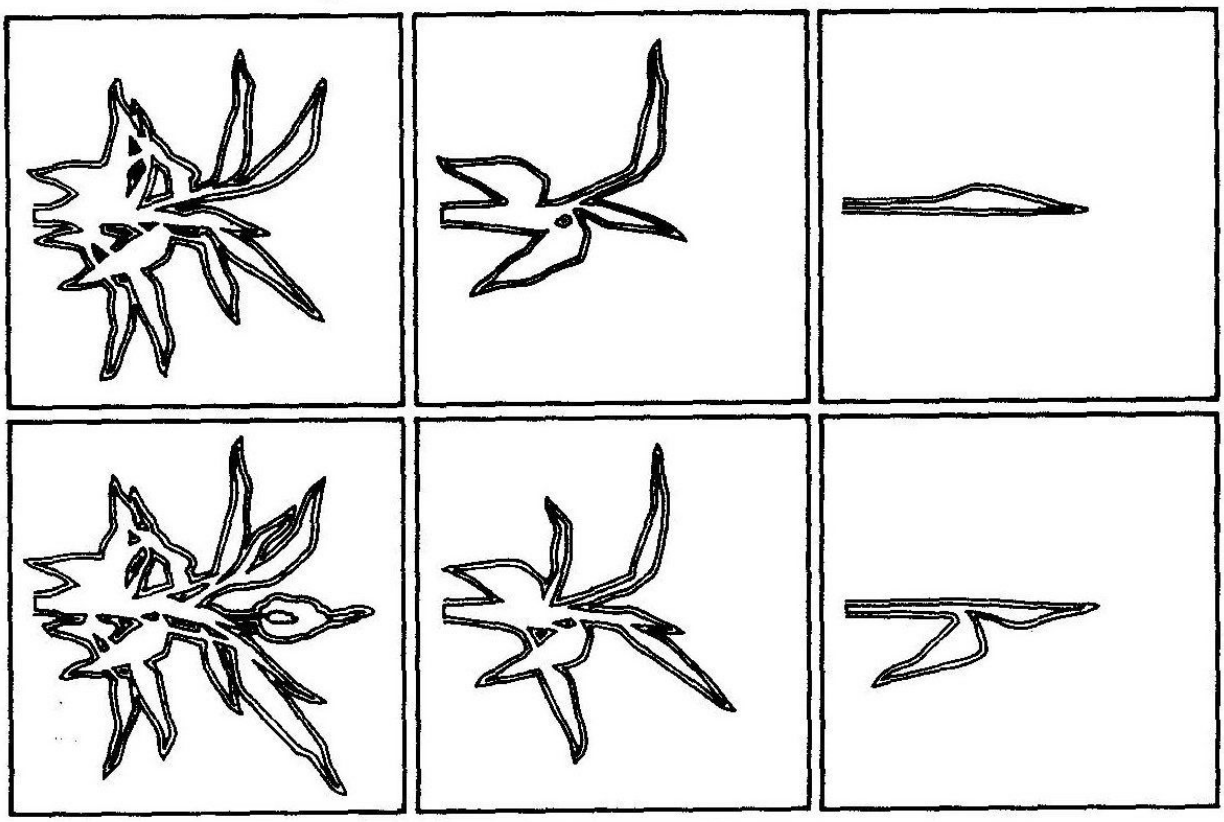
So if you said to me
How you longed to be free
I'd go on home...
Alone.

I SAW SOMETHING UNDER THE SNOW ON A HILL

Scintillating beams of light pass,
through vapors to animate the knowing.
The country comes to praise, a mass,
invigorated by being, showing.
The white oblivion can't last,
under it the glazed hills are life, glowing.

by K. J. Quick
Spring, '78

forever growing



forever experiencing

In response to a letter to the Editor from Janet Bode, printed in the May issue of Playgirl magazine, the Bi Center was flooded with letters from all over the country!

Hello, dear and wonderful new friends and new members all across the United States! Thank you for writing. Just to show our appreciation, this edition we are devoting a feature section to you.

--The Editors

Dear Friends:

I've just received the new newsletter and I want to thank Katherine for speaking out...

Basically...I am a "transsexual" who has, after surgery, often questioned my needs for such a radical solution. In the long run I am indeed happier, more content and better adjusted. However, this means, in my case, that I'm beginning to accept my twilight zone which is between female and male somewhere; a realization of psychic hermaphroditism--not that transsexualism was necessary.

I applaud Katherine's courage...

S.D., San Francisco

I came out as a Gay person ten years ago...

...Falcon Studios did their first bisexual movie called "Working Late." It's become my favorite movie...

My only sexual experience with a woman was when I was about 22. I liked it, but prefer men. Now, today, I feel like a closet bisexual. How does a Gay male explore his bisexuality when he doesn't know how to seduce a woman without emotional involvement? I can't go to a straight singles bar cause I don't know how to play the games...

S.C., Visalia, California

I have been in prison now for two years and because of this I have become aware of a conflict with my sexuality...

I would like to correspond with somebody confidentially who would be able to help me accept my new-found outlook.

S.B., Kingston, Ontario, Canada

Having begun to realize my basic bisexual nature, I am pleased that I have found out about your organization...

J.N., Silver Spring, Maryland

...For some time I've become aware of my desire to have an experience with a woman...I'm experiencing feelings I never knew I had. I still enjoy men in every aspect--my problem is that I'm not in much of a position to meet the "right" kind of people with whom to explore this new part of myself. There have been a few gay meetings on campus that I've been tempted to go to but I'd probably get kicked right out of my sorority if I was found out...

I'm also interested in group sex but all of this I want to do in a fairly discreet manner until I find out if I like it--in that case, I won't care who knows my secrets.

M.T., Albuquerque, New Mexico

I was happy to read in Playgirl of the whereabouts of your center, delighted to know where help and information are...

...I have to admit my fantasies towards some of my female friends are driving me up the wall...

C.C., Texas

I would like more information about your group...I guess it would be comforting to know how other people like me feel and to exchange views.

F.W., Chester, Pennsylvania

I am a married, 27 year old male with one child...How does one know for sure if he is bisexual or maybe just Gay?

M.L., Bridgeport, Connecticut

Dear Lifesavers,

...Where I live now, Bi's are totally unacceptable. There is one bar about 35 miles away which is rather Gay but...99% male. Bi females are scarce and I'm growing more frustrated each passing weekend!

...All I can say is that I'm glad I read Playgirl this month!

S.B., Lowville, New York

I read about the Center in the May issue of Playgirl. I would like any information, please, that I might better understand--my husband is bisexual.

F.S., Corpus Christi, Texas

Would you please advise me if there is any method in your center where I could contact other women interested in...a bisexual relationship.

R.P.,Myrtle Beach,South Carolina

I read about your center in Playgirl... I didn't think places like that existed. I have often thought about what it would be like to make love to another woman... I live in a small town..so all I can do is fantasize...As a matter of fact,I'm not at all sure now how to write this letter...I love sex...

M.T., Lyon Falls, New York

I am a married bisexual and need information as to how other married men handle their situation.I am sure there are others out there with the same needs ...I made a long distance call and got your recording...

D.H., Champaign, Illinois

...Being out here in big Gillette, it's hard to find anything about bisexuality here...

J.C., Gillette, Wyoming

I need all the information you might give me concerning bisexuality...I am... very concerned, also unhappy about my present situation.

D.V., Louisville, Kentucky

...Could you send me any info you have on activities on this side of the Bay (Berkeley, Oakland)?

Yours in happy ambisexuality,
M.S., Berkeley, California

I'm 21, with 2 young boys. Once married, but it ended for many reasons. One was I had found gay friends and had lovers... When my parents found out, they took my sons to live with them and told me, "you must choose; either be Gay or Straight."

They worked on my mind for a long time until my affairs ended and I just dated dudes. I had no support from my gay friends because I was downed for being bisexual. It's been a long time since I've made it with a chick, but I still want to; I still find women attractive. I'm in a living arrangement with a man who knows of my past but never brings it up...

I don't like women who claim they don't like men sexually then try to act and dress like men...

...The kind of woman that turns me on as a friend and sexually is the everyday type woman who just happens to be bisexual like me...

P.M., Oakland, California

MARRIAGE VOW

(to my Capricorn lovers)

"The higher the sun rises, the more earth it touches.
The powerful one is honored with horses in great numbers.
In a single day, that one is granted audience three times."
--I Ching (The Book of Changes)

I am honored with more treasure than I can carry home:
your faces wash up around me
and are sucked back again, rolling against each other
with a sound of zippers or dice.
Though I shine at high noon,
I have only one body, still
only two hands, and they are full.

So, love, let us swallow each other:
born from outside in, we'll live and die
together, throbbing at the bottom of memory--
a drop between yolk and amber
a piece of our ordinary body, our coming translated
from time to flesh
like the surfer, flying through water
frozen into petroglyph
in fire just now poured, cooled, hardened
into rock.
We are magic beyond wanting
still together
we go very far apart
we fill the sky, and pour down on one another
over and over, translated
from salt to light, from center
to circle again.

--Beverly Mesch

Groups and Workshops

OPEN RELATIONSHIPS WORKSHOPS

--or, "Just How Open Do I Want My Relationships To Be?"

Monogamy is a valid place for many people. For others, the idea of having one other person who is the "be-all and "end-all," the answer to all one's needs, is neither realistic or desirable. The problem of developing a non-monogamous relationship is finding creative and innovative ways of dealing with issues of time management, jealousy, trust, and honesty, and of developing a group of people who can support you when everything goes wrong.

This one-day workshop is not designed to give you all the answers but rather to help define the concerns and to look at some ways of dealing with them.

Cost: $20.00 for Bi Center members
$25.00 for non-members
Time: Saturday, August 11, 1979
9:30 - 6:00
Place: The Bi Center

Preregistration is essential, as the workshop is limited to 20 individuals. To preregister, send $5.00 to David Lourea at 1761 Hayes St., S.F., CA 94117.

Facilitators of this workshop will be David Lourea and Lee Olivier.

I WANT TO BE CLOSE--
WAIT, NOT THAT CLOSE!

INTIMACY WORKSHOP FOR MEN AND WOMEN

A one-day workshop to explore ways of sharing intimately with others and to examine the risks and rewards involved in this process. We will examine the ways we set limits--and the ways we can push beyond those limits--in our intimate communications on both emotional and sexual levels. The workshop includes both verbal and nonverbal sharing in dyads and small groups.

Led by David Lourea and Marilyn King.
Cost: $20.00 for Bi Center members
$25.00 for non-members
Time: Saturday, August 18, 1979
10:00 AM - 6:00 PM
Place: The Bi Center, 1757 Hayes, S.F.

Preregistration is essential. To preregister, send a check to Marilyn King, 625 Ashbury #12, San Francisco, CA 94117. Deadline for preregistration is August 11. For more information, call Marilyn at 431-5513, or David at 567-3871.

AN INTRODUCTION TO
CONFRONTING THE LAST TABOO

This is a one-day workshop designed to take a look at our attitudes, myths and stereotypes around Sadomasochism, to explore the range of behavior the term encompasses and look at the processes of setting limits, creating "scenes" and using "toys" and accessories safely and sensually. For people who are into Sadomasochism, the initials "S/M" are often seen as standing for "sensuality" and "mutuality" and for one of the most profound ways of communicating erotically with a partner.

Cost: $30.00 for Bi Center members
$35.00 for non-members
Time: Saturday, August 4, 1979
10 AM - 6 PM
Place: The Bi Center, 1757 Hayes St., San Francisco, CA 94117

Preregistration is essential. To preregister, send a check or money order for $5.00 to David Lourea, c/o the Bi Center.

Facilitators: Steven Brown, David Lourea, Margo Rila, and Cynthia Slater.

For more information, call The Bi Center at 922-2300 or David at 567-3871.

EAST BAY
DROP-IN RAP GROUP FOR MEN

A drop-in rap group for bisexual men is being held at the new Pacific Center at 2712 Telegraph Ave., in Berkeley, at 7:45 PM Tuesday evenings. The group will be an opportunity to meet new friends and will focus on our common problems. It is being conducted by Al Hill (845-7912, 843-5372) and Ran Sliter (655-8703).

Tuesday Rap Group

Our Tuesday night drop-in discussion group's emphasis is on getting to know one another in a casual rap rather than getting into "heavies" which can only be dealt with in on-going groups. If you are interested in knowing more about the Bi-Center and meeting other people, drop in on a Tuesday night at 7:30 pm.

Community Bulletin Board

OFFICE HOURS

The Bi Center is open to the public on:
Tuesdays, from 5:30 to 7:00 PM
Thursdays, from 7:00 to 10:00 PM
Give us a phone call, or stop by, look the place over, and get acquainted!

NEWSLETTER SCHEDULE

All contributions to the Bi-Monthly, including announcements, etc., must be in by the start of the Pasteup session. All articles longer than 50 words must be in by Layout day. The Planning session will be held in East Bay this time; all other sessions will be at the Bi Center, and your help is badly needed!

LAYOUT: Sunday, Aug. 19, 11 AM - 4 PM
PASTEUP: Sunday, Aug. 26, 11 AM - 4 PM

POTLUCK

You are invited to a potluck/party at the Bi Center on Saturday, July 21, from 7:30 PM to midnight. Please bring food and/or drink to share.

DISCO PARTY

Friday, August 3rd: it's disco! Starts at 9:00 PM, and the donation--this time!--is one disco album (new/used), or (if you can't bear to part with your disco records) $2.00 for Bi Center members, $3.00 for non-members. See you there!

MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

Saturday, August 18, will be the night for dreaming--and maybe having those dreams come true! The theme of this party at the Bi Center is "A Midsummer Night's Dream." Costume is optional (but encouraged): come as you are, come as your dream, or come looking for her, or him (or them!). Time: 9:00 PM to (whenever). Donation: $2.00 for Bi Center members, $3.00 for non-members.

SWIMMING AT TOM'S

On Saturday, August 12th, there will be a swimming party at Tom's place, 3930-21st Street, in San Francisco, from 12 noon to 6:00 PM (come early to catch the sun). This is an outdoor, heated pool, and swimsuits are required. Children are welcome. Suggested donation: $2.00 for Bi Center members, $3.00 for non-members.

GAMES NIGHT

Bring your favorite games to share--Scrabble, Backgammon, cards, Monopoly, whatever--and we'll have some games here, too. Thursday, July 19, from 7:30 to 10:30 PM. Please bring drinks and snacks to share.

RESTAURANT OUTINGS

Our previous restaurant trip was a great success. There will be another exciting adventure in gourmet dining on Sunday, August 5th. Space is limited to 8, so call Dianne at 648-1538 (after 7 PM) soon, to make a reservation and get the details on the time and place.

TRIPS

To allow more flexibility in scheduling out-of-town trips this summer, with the gas shortage still a problem, we will be deciding the dates and times as conditions permit. We have planned:

(1) another day trip to Harbin Hot Springs,
(2) a day trip to Point Reyes,
(3) an overnight car-camping and/or backpacking trip.

If you are interested in one or more of these events, call or write the Bi Center and leave a message for Jim Barnes, with:

(1) your name and phone number,
(2) the trip(s) you are interested in,
(3) the date and times most convenient for you.

We will get back to you at least a week in advance of the trip.

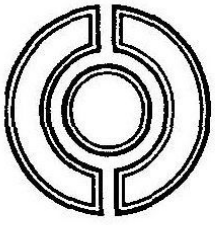
BI-MONTHLY CALENDAR 1979

July

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3 OPEN DROP-IN RAP GROUP P. 9 ↓	4	5	6	7
8	9 BOARD MEETING	10 ↓	11	12	13	14
15	16	17 ↓	18	19 GAMES NIGHT! P. 10	20	21 POTLUCK P. 10
22	23	24 ↓	25	26	27	28
29	30	31 ↓				

august

			1	2	3 DISCO PARTY P. 10	4 "LAST" TABOO WKSP P. 9
5 RESTAURANT TRIP P. 10	6	7 OPEN DROP-IN RAP-GROUP ↓ P. 9	8	9	10	11 OPEN RELATION-SHIPS P. 9
12 SWIMMING at TOM'S P. 10	13 BOARD MEETING	14 ↓	15	16	17	18 CLOSE-NESS WKSP. P. 9 MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM PARTY P. 10
19 NEWSLETTER LAYOUT P. 10	20	21 ↓	22	23	24	25
26 NEWSLETTER PASTEUP P. 10	27	28 ↓	29	30	31	



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